

NEW RELEASES

Wickes has been very faithful to the period, and the characters too are faithfully reproduced from Chandler's glamorous but sleazy world — pretty dames, lugubrious undertakers dwarf bellhops and slick movie moguls vie for Marlowe's attention, and we're never sure, until the end, who are the goodies and who are the baddies.

For the five tales (*Nevada Gas*, *Finger-man*, *Smart-Aleck Kill*, *The King in Yellow*

and *The Pencil*), Wickes has amassed a bunch of top American actors who appear and re-appear in various guises in all five stories. Powers Boothe (of *Southern Comfort* fame) is very good as Marlowe, and Kathryn Leigh-Scott and William Kearns respectively fit their parts as his girlfriend, and Irish Lieutenant McGee whose plodding police methods are constantly shown up by Marlowe.

If I have any criticism of the series it's that it lacks pace, preferring to concentrate on obtaining the 'feel' of the period. If you're a fan of *Death Wish*-style fast-action crime, you may find it a bit slow, but for the more 'old-fashioned' crime connoisseur, it's a bit of a treat — *Jo Baker*

Distributed by Palace Video on VHS and Beta.



Powers Boothe plays Detective Philip Marlowe in *Marlowe — Private Eye*

No Deposit, No Return WDH
(U) 1976 1hr 52mins. Two children, on their way to their grandfather, meet up with two inept safe-breakers. Starring David Niven.

Peter No-Tail VOM
(U) 1hr 21mins. Story of a kitten born without a tail who is taken under the wing of two city children with whom it has various adventures.

Pinocchio's Storybook Adventures IV
(U) 1hr 20mins. Pinocchio entertains his friends with fairy tales.

Popeye and Friends at Sea SEL
1hr. Continuing Popeye series with more adventure of spinach-eating superman.

Postman Pat 2 LMV
1hr. Four adventures of Postman and his cat from the television series.

Return to Witch Mountain WDH
(U) 1979 1hr 34mins. Tia and Tony return to Witch Mountain in time to save a man's life. Starring Bette Davis, Christopher Lee and Ike Eisenmann.

Rock 'N Roll Wolf ART
1hr 27mins. Musical about big bad wolf and five kid goats.

Sacha the Wonderdog VFP
1hr 20mins. Adventures and super-canine powers of Sacha. Starring Frederick Stafford.

The Selfish Giant VOF
Combination of three half-hour cartoons.

Thunderbirds in Outer Space PV
1hr 32mins. Animated Gerry Anderson film.

Victor and Maria LMV
1hr. Una Stubbs tells twelve stories about Maria and friendly bear, Victor.

The Apple Dumpling Gang WDH
(U) 1974 1hr 40mins. Gambler tricked into becoming guardian of three orphans. Starring Slim Pickens.

The Archies SEL
1hr. Comic strip series popular in America.

Barefoot in The Park CIC
(PG) 1967 1hr 42mins. Marital comedy starring Jane Fonda and Robert Redford.

Beetle Bailey SEL
1hr 13mins. Troop of female soldiers arrives at Camp Swampy, to the despair of Sergeant Snorkie.

The Captain's Table RANK
(A) 1958 1hr 26mins. Comedy about new captain on board "Queen Adelaide" luxury liner who has had no experience on passenger vessels. Starring John Gregson, Peggy Cummins, Donald Sinden, Richard Wattis and Joan Sims.

Carry On England RANK
(AA) 1hr 29mins. Captain sent to discipline an experimental mixed anti-aircraft battery; trouble starts when he attempts to segregate the sexes. Starring Kenneth Connor, Windsor Davies, Joan Sims and Judy Geeson.

The Cheerleaders VPD
(18) A look behind the scenes of American college football at the players and the girls who support them on and off the field.

The Compleat Rutles PAL
Or "All You Need is Cash"; comedy with Monty Python stars Eric Idle and Neil Innes in a parody of The Beatles' success story. Also featuring Mick Jagger, George Harrison and Paul Simon.

Cry Uncle MOV
1hr 25mins. Allen Garfield and Pamela Gruen star in sex farce.

Diner MGM
1983 1hr 46mins. Five adolescents learn about growing up in an open-all-hours Diner. Starring Mickey Rourke.

The Early Bird RANK
(U) 1965 1hr 35mins. Norman Wisdom as Norman Pitkin, ace milkman of Grinsdale's Dairy, who tries to stop a rival dairy from encroaching on his area.

The First Time VTC
1hr 30mins. Set in a college where a freshman refuses sex with the girls until he falls in love. Starring Tim Choate and Krista Erricson.

CALLING ALL T

Star Trek II is out on video and is confidently predicted to "Go Where No Video Has Gone Before"! Allan Bryce takes a look at this hugely popular space series. . .



Leonard Nimoy as Spock and William Shatner as Kirk in *Star Trek II*

Star Trek is a major cultural phenomenon. The famous television science-fiction series was cancelled in 1969 after only three seasons (78 episodes), but fourteen years later it's as popular as ever, especially with the vast clan of "Trekkies" who regularly gather at conventions all round the world to discuss the merits of individual episodes and purchase huge quantities of assorted *Star Trek* memorabilia, ranging from novels based on the series to comic books, model kits and even Mr. Spock ears (surprise your friends!).

It all began way back in 1966 as an idea that producer Gene Roddenberry had of making an outer space version of the popular Western series, *Wagon Train*, which would be aimed at adults and have continuing characters. He developed a pilot episode in which Jeffrey Hunter starred as the captain of a space vessel trapped on a bizarre planet by alien creatures. But NBC (the studio who were interested in the series) decided the show was too intellectual (!) and asked for a second example.

This time Roddenberry called it *Where No Man Has Gone Before* and featured William Shatner as the heroic James Tiberius Kirk. The rest, as they say, is history.

The first Trek film, *Star Trek — The Motion Picture* (video from CIC) was a 1979 blockbuster which cost some forty million dollars to produce, much of which was squandered on unusable special effects. Its story was a combination of two television episodes, *The Changeling* (on video from CIC) and *The Doomsday Machine*, and concerned the Enterprise's mission to intercept a cloud-like object on a collision course with Earth. The opening scenes as a fleet of Klingon spacecraft are destroyed by the malevolent cloud makes it look as though this is going to be one of the greatest of all sci-fi movies, but then the story gets bogged down as all the *Star Trek* regulars are slowly introduced.

It soon becomes apparent that writer Harold Livingston has not captured the lively characterisations that the series thrived on, and two new characters, the bald-headed Deltan navigator Ilia (Persis Khambatta) and the square-jawed Captain Decker (Stephen Collins), are superfluous and dull. The film does have its good points though. Particularly striking is Jerry Goldsmith's Oscar-nominated music score, which utilises very little of the original series' theme, and the special effects often convey a real sense of grandeur — especially in scenes such as the awe-inspiring sequence where the

newly refurbished Enterprise is first glimpsed in its space dock. And despite being criticised for its shortcomings, the film became one of the most commercially successful science-fiction movies ever made — confirming the launch of a whole future series of big-screen adventures for the *Star Trek* crew.

Star Trek II — The Wrath of Kahn, the latest *Star Trek* movie (just out on CIC) is a sequel of sorts to one of the more memorable television episodes, *Space Seed* (also available from CIC), in which the crew of the Enterprise encountered a race of tyrannical supermen and their wily leader Kahn (Ricardo Montalban). The tale ended with Kahn tricked into exile on a remote planet by Captain Kirk (William Shatner). But fifteen years later in this feature film he at last gets a chance for revenge.

The film opens with a now deskbound Kirk, celebrating his birthday with old friends Spock (Leonard Nimoy) and "Bones" McCoy (DeForest Kelly) — an occasion at which Spock gives him a copy of *A Tale Of Two Cities* (interestingly hinting at Spock's Sidney Carton-like sacrifice later in the movie). The inter-



Ricardo Montalban is superb as the demonic Kahn, seen here with two lovelies

TREKKIES!



An unsuspecting galactic traveller receives 'the bug treatment' in *Star Trek II*

play between these familiar characters is touching and amusing, immediately establishing an atmosphere like that of the television series — and it's relevant to note that the film was actually shot by technicians from Paramount's television arm to give it a more intimate feel.

Kirk has been promoted to Admiral now, and spends his time training younger people for space missions. But

when word arrives that his old enemy Kahn has escaped from his prison planet and stolen a lethal device known as Project Genesis, he's back at the helm of the Enterprise before you can say "Beam me up, Scotty".

The awesome secret of the Genesis Effect is that it can destroy planets, as is demonstrated in a superbly designed sequence showing a computer-animated



One of the devilish Kahn's henchmen in *Star Trek II* — The Wrath of Kahn

simulation of its powers. In the wrong hands it could destroy the Universe — and if Kahn's gnarled digits aren't the wrong hands then I don't know what are! Kahn is magnificently played by Ricardo Montalban as a swashbuckling space pirate with a face whose lines could have been etched in granite, and a tendency to chew up the scenery so fast that it often doesn't look as though space will be big enough for him.

He's a great villain, and suitably complemented by the gang of genetically enhanced super-criminals who accompany him in his vengeful battle against his arch-enemy, Kirk. The stage is thus set for some action-packed space battles and a climax that will bring tears to the eyes of hardened Trekkies everywhere (although I don't know what I'm telling them for — they've probably already seen it dozens of times!).

It's a very good movie, splendidly directed by Nicholas Meyer, who also made that hugely enjoyable time travel romp, *Time After Time* (video from Warners, and don't miss it), and is well acted by all its familiar cast. Shatner in particular is constantly fine as a sort of space age Horatio Hornblower suffering his way through what Americans like to call "a mid-life crisis". He appeared somewhat ill-at-ease in the first *Star Trek* movie, mainly because of the lack of decent characterisation in the script, but here writer Jack Sowards has given him some sharp dialogue and a well-rounded personality which shines out amid the film's traditional futuristic trappings. And of course the same goes for the rest of the trusty crew: pointy-eared science officer Spock — always logical and often amusing; harassed engineer "Scotty" ("She canna go any faster Cap'n") and cynical ship's doctor "Bones" McCoy. All are given exactly the same characterisations fondly remembered from the television series, which is probably the reason why this movie got a bigger thumbs-up from Trekkies than its predecessor.



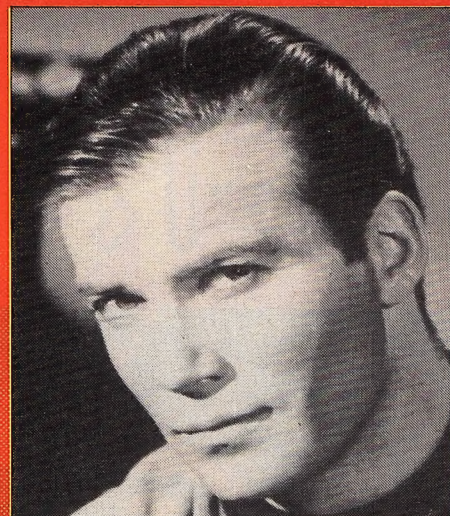
James T. Kirk (William Shatner) is forcibly restrained by Bones (DeForest Kelly) in *Star Trek II*

CALLING ALL TREKKIES!

▶ You'll be glad to know that the original Jeffrey Hunter pilot for *Star Trek* did not go to waste: it was re-edited into a two part *Trek* episode entitled *The Menagerie* and won a science-fiction "Hugo" award. Roddenberry maintained the quality of the series by hiring top science-fiction writers like Richard (Duel) Matheson and Harlan (A Boy And His Dog) Ellison to script the show. He also insisted that the solid and appealing characterisations developed for the series regulars would remain constant throughout, giving the

audience something to latch on to other than the juvenile antics that ran through most sci-fi shows of its time.

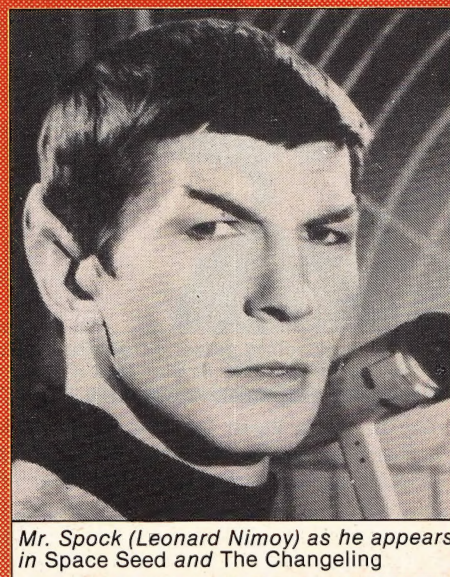
That appeal still exists today — even though Kirk and crew are somewhat longer in the tooth! They will all be back with us in *Star Trek III — The Search For Spock* next year, but until then we can savour the intergalactic enjoyment provided by *The Wrath Of Kahn*. As Mr. Spock would say, it's the only logical thing to do. □



Kirk (William Shatner) as he appeared in earlier *Star Trek* episodes



Chekhov (Walter Koenig) lands a bug which (literally!) eats his brain



Mr. Spock (Leonard Nimoy) as he appears in *Space Seed* and *The Changeling*



The crew of the *Starship Enterprise* in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Kahn*